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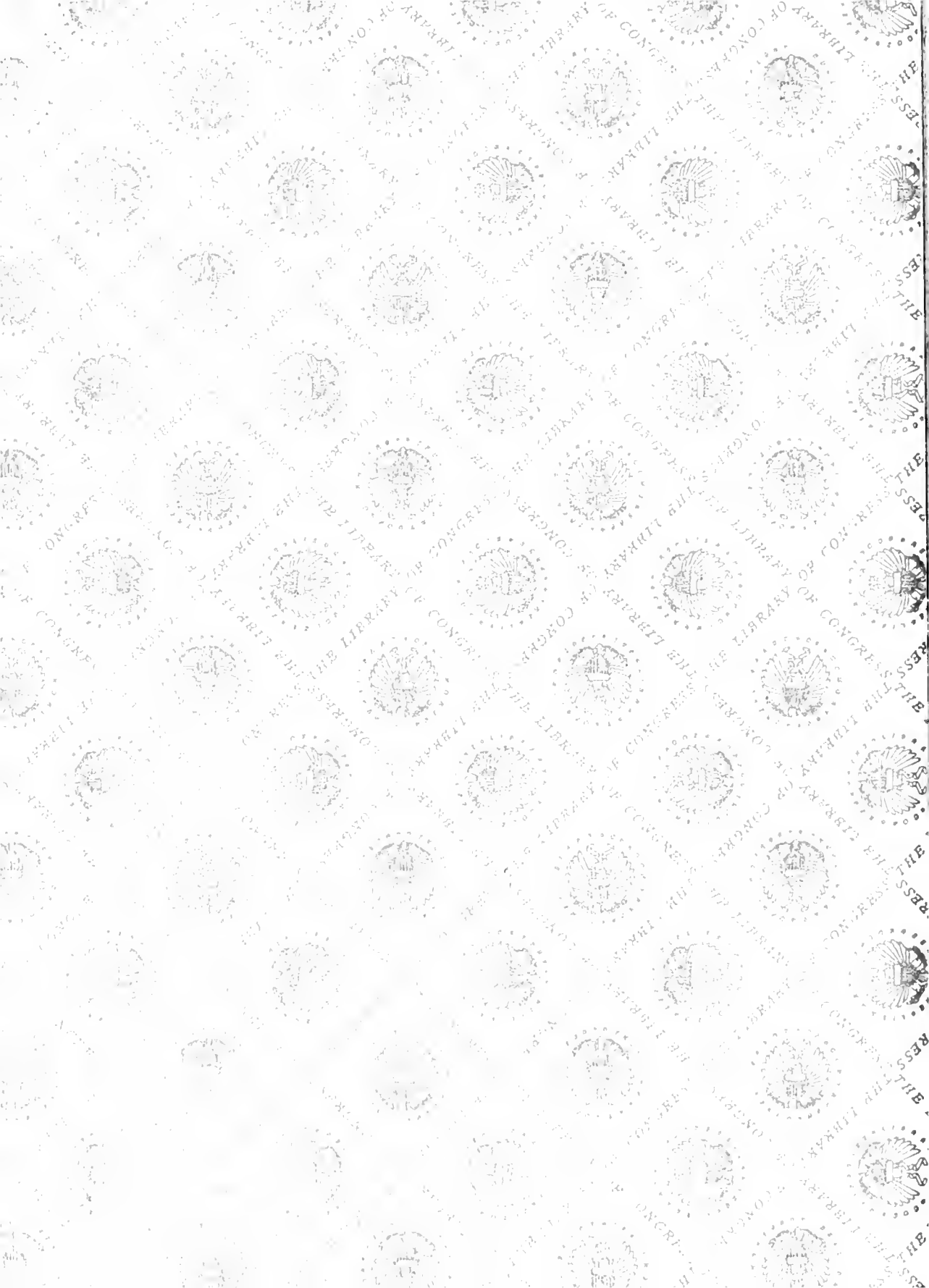
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ADDRESS  
TO  
Department Encampment  
Grand Army of the Republic

SARATOGA, JUNE 26-27, 1902

By CHARLES A. ORR

Department Commander

and

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE THEREON

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ALBANY

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## Annual Report of the Department Commander.

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At Rochester last year you elected me Department Commander, and all through my term I have tried to show appreciation by serving my Comrades faithfully, and truly hope I have done so. In each and every instance I have had their interests at heart, and the welfare of this great Department.

It has been a pleasant duty for me, and there has been but little friction in the Posts. I firmly believe if every Comrade would stop to think and realize the true meaning of Fraternity, Charity and Loyalty, and recall the time between '61 and '65, when we shared each other's troubles and joys—yes, and helped to bear one another's burdens—there would be no friction whatever, and a feeling of comradeship would prevail throughout this Department.

Our Thirty-fifth National Encampment was held at Cleveland, Ohio. The people of that city have reason to feel proud of the feeling the Comrades have towards it; but the Encampment was brought to a very abrupt close by the saddest of news—news that touched the heart of every one of us—the critical condition of our beloved Comrade and President, William McKinley, who had been shot on September 6, 1901, in the Temple of Music, Pan-American Exposition. Of this I need say but little, for we all followed those last sad hours of that noble man's life, and the history of that terrible crime is known throughout the world.

Saturday evening, September 14, the Department Commander tendered to President Roosevelt, through Comrades Sterrett, Kay and Ewell, the services of the Grand Army of the Republic. The President wrote a note to Secretary Cortelyou, asking that

the G.A.R. be given a place in line of escort. Arrangements were made accordingly, giving the Comrades of the order distinguished recognition throughout the entire sad ceremonies, from the funeral services at the Milburn residence to the final interment at Canton.

Twelve Comrades were present at the services at the Milburn residence Sunday morning, September 15th. The body escort from the City Hall in Buffalo Monday morning to the funeral train was composed of Comrades under command of the Department Commander. Comrades from nearly, if not all the Departments, were present. In the first files to follow the hearse were Frank M. Sterrett, Adjutant-General, Missouri; Joseph W. Kay, Past Department Commander, New York; O. H. Coulter, Past Department Commander, Kansas; Joseph E. Ewell, Judge Advocate, Department New York; P. H. Coney, member National Council, Kansas, and your Department Commander.

The next files were made up from the representatives of the various Posts of Buffalo and other Comrades. The funeral train was accompanied to Washington by a special detail consisting of Frank M. Sterrett, Adjutant-General; Alfred Lyth, Past Senior Vice-Commander-in-Chief; Joseph W. Kay, Past Commander, Department of New York; W. F. Billings, Commander Post 9, Buffalo, N. Y., and Department Commander Charles A. Orr. The evidence of mourning en route was a most touching tribute by a loyal people. At Washington, September 17th, Department Commander Israel W. Stone, of the Department of the Potomac, had charge of the special escort, composed of Comrades.

The Commander-in-Chief, Grand Army of the Republic, Ell Torrance, attended the funeral obsequies of the late President at Washington, D. C. He also accompanied the funeral train to Canton, Ohio, with Comrades Frank M. Sterrett, Adjutant-General; William H. Armstrong, National Council of Administration, Department of Indiana; Edgar Allen, National Council of Administration, Department of Virginia; A. A. Taylor, National Council of Administration, Department of Ohio, and there represented the Grand Army of the Republic in the final ceremonies.

September 17th—thirty-ninth anniversary of Antietam—had been designated as “Grand Army Day” at the Pan-American, but on account of Comrade McKinley’s death it was changed into a memorial service, under the auspices of the Department of New York G. A. R. Comrades from all over the country were present. Addresses were made by Rev. Ezra Tinker, Chaplain, Department of New York; Hon. W. I. Buchanan, Director-General Pan-American Exposition; Capt. Joseph E. Ewell, Judge-Advocate, Department of New York; Major-General Daniel E. Sickles, U. S. A., retired; General Leo Rassieur, Past Commander-in-Chief, G. A. R.; General Isaac S. Catlin, U. S. A., retired, and other Comrades.

A suitable memorial was adopted, which was beautifully engrossed and framed and sent to Mrs. McKinley. A photographic reproduction of this is given in the Grand Army Memorial published by the McKinley Memorial Publishing Company, of Buffalo.

A more lasting memorial is to be erected at Canton, Ohio, in honor of our departed President and Comrade, and the Grand Army of the Republic throughout the country were asked to contribute. The Department of New York’s contribution will amount, I believe, to about \$3,000, and I want to thank the Comrades for their generosity in this matter. It is a very gratifying result, and I appreciate it.

#### OUR FLAG.

I believe the time has come when every school in the State is flying the flag we love, and great credit is due the Hon. Charles R. Skinner, Superintendent of Public Instruction, for this result. He sent out a circular to the schools throughout the State in reference to this matter, and for doing so the Department of New York has again occasion to thank him for another evidence of his loyalty to it.

#### GOVERNOR ODELL.

The thanks of the Comrades of this Department are due Governor Odell for signing the bill entitled “An act to amend

the Civil Service Law in relation to veterans," also to Comrade Senator Ellsworth, who introduced the bill; and to Col. Geo. W. Dunn, Speaker Nixon, Assemblyman, Comrades C. H. Cotton, Jotham Allds, Otto Kelsey, and many others, who assisted in passing the bill, which gives all veterans who have passed a Civil Service examination and are employed by the State or by any of the cities, counties, towns or villages thereof, additional security in holding their positions. It is well to state that the law as it now stands is practically what was urged by one of my predecessors in office, Comrade Kay. I also want to call attention to the bill drafted by Edwin H. Riseley, of Bacon Post 53, Utica, introduced by Mr. McQuade, of Oneida County, in the Assembly, and passed, providing for the re-interment of veterans buried in Potter's Field, the towns, villages and cities to bear the expense.

#### PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT.

President Theodore Roosevelt also gives encouragement to the veterans in his annual message, in many of his public utterances, and in his Executive Order, in the followings words: "The attention of the Departments is hereby called to the provisions of the laws giving preference to veterans in appointment and retention. The President desires that whenever the needs of the service will justify it, and the laws will permit, preference shall be given alike in appointment and retention to honorably discharged veterans of the Civil War, who are fit and qualified to perform the duties of the places which they seek or are filling."

The Department Commander has had occasion to call the President's attention to this Executive order in the case of a Comrade employed in the Census Bureau, who was to be dropped. The President at once referred the matter to the Director of the Census, and his answer was very satisfactory, the Comrade being retained in the service. And there are many such instances of watchful care on the part of the President concerning our Comrades.

### MEMORIAL DAY.

As each year goes by, the number of dead Comrades to honor and graves to decorate greatly increases, and fewer are left to do it. For this reason, every Comrade who is able to do so, should take an active part in Memorial Day services.

I would rejoice greatly if the day could be made a Memorial Day in reality, instead of being regarded by some people as a holiday for all sorts of games and amusements.

### MEMBERSHIP.

During the past year the Department has had the following gains and losses:

Number of Posts July 1, 1901.....	591
Number of Posts January 1, 1902.....	622
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Gain of Posts.....	31
	<hr/>
Number of members July 1, 1901.....	30,143
Number of members January 1, 1902.....	30,381
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Gain of members.....	238
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New charters .....	5
Charters surrendered .....	3
Number of deaths during year.....	1,051
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In 1871, the number of members was 5,879. Twenty-two years later, in 1893, our membership was 41,435, and from 1893 to January 1, 1902, this Department has lost 11,054 members.

At present I think there are about 100,000 veterans in this Department, and many of them at some time or other have belonged to the Grand Army. I want to urge upon you the importance of having these boys reinstated. And it is just as important to get those veterans who have never joined any post to now enlist with us.

### MONUMENT BILL.

A bill for a McKinley monument in Buffalo was introduced by Assemblyman Bradley and Senator Hill, of Buffalo, and passed, appropriating \$100,000 for the same. Much credit is due Messrs. Bradley, Hill and Butler (of the Buffalo Evening News) for this appropriation. The veterans feel very grateful to them and to Governor Odell for signing the bill.

### VISITS TO POSTS.

I have attended quite a number of reunions in different parts of the State, but have been unable to visit every county by reason of the condition of my health.

The Department Commander and staff has been received with the greatest courtesy by the Comrades and citizens generally wherever he has been, showing that the Grand Army of the Republic has the love and respect of all good citizens.

### SOLDIERS' AND SAILORS' HOME.

As a member of the Board of Trustees of the State Soldiers' and Sailors' Home at Bath, your Department Commander has attended its meetings during the past year, and is therefore familiar with its workings.

The Home is recognized throughout the country as the model Soldiers' Home, and the Comrades of this Department, and indeed all citizens of our State, ought to feel proud of it.

At the last meeting of the Board, May 8, 1902, contracts were let for the construction of a new convalescence barracks at a cost of about \$60,000, and general repairs not exceeding \$5,000.

Col. Andrew Davidson is the Commandant of the Home, and is giving entire satisfaction, not only to our Comrade inmates, but he has the entire confidence of the Board of Trustees as well. On May 31st there were 1,566 veterans in the Home and 500 absent on leave.

### OXFORD HOME.

I regret exceedingly that I have been unable to visit the Woman's Relief Corps Home at Oxford, but hope to be able to do

so during the summer. I hear, however, of its excellent work and management under the superintendency of Mrs. Ellen M. Putnam.

Governor Odell has visited both Homes and is greatly pleased with what he saw.

#### MOUNT MCGREGOR.

As long as the American nation lives, interest will never cease in the cottage at the mountain-top where our gallant leader—Grant—passed the last days of his glorious life. Each year several hundred people visit it, notwithstanding the fact that it involves a long drive, but they are well repaid, for it is kept in splendid condition by its custodian, our Comrade, O. P. Clarke.

#### WOMAN'S RELIEF CORPS AND LADIES OF THE G. A. R.

It is now, more than ever, that we need the help of these noble women, for a great many of the Comrades are well on in years; some of them without families and almost helpless. These women are always ready to do what only women can in cheering and brightening the lives of our unfortunate Comrades, and I feel too much honor cannot be given them for the work they are doing in this department.

#### SONS OF VETERANS.

I am glad to see that the Sons of Veterans take a deep interest in their Order, for through them the coming generation will know of what their forefathers did and what they endured for the sake of their country. I hope to see that Order increase each year and their influence be far-reaching.

#### DAUGHTERS OF VETERANS.

This noble Order does much towards making the lives of our sick Comrades and their families as pleasant as possible, and we will always feel deeply grateful to them for their good work.

#### LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE.

The members of this committee were former Judge-Advocate L. E. Griffith, Past Department Commander Stephen P. Corliss,

and former Assistant Adjutant-General W. W. Bennett. These Comrades were selected because of their experience. Their efforts have been untiring and results very gratifying.

The Amendment of the Civil Service Law was really the most important measure that has passed in several years, especially that portion of it which takes in all cities, villages and towns.

Judge Griffith informs me that special praise should be given Comrade Bennett for his ceaseless work on the committee.

Thanks should also be extended to Comrades Allan C. Bakewell, M. J. Cummings and George H. Jackson, who attended the hearing before the Governor on the civil service amendment; Past Department Commander Edward J. Atkinson presenting the oral argument, and Comrade Joseph W. Kay one in writing in favor of the bill, in a very satisfactory manner.

#### IN MEMORIAM.

During the year this Department has lost Past Department Commander Ira M. Hedges, whose death was announced in General Orders.

The Department will also keenly feel the loss of Col. Joseph Porter of Rome, a member of the Council of Administration.

It also becomes my sad duty to announce the death of Assistant Quartermaster-General and Past Department Commander L. Coe Young, which occurred on the 15th inst., at his home at Binghamton, after a long and painful illness.

His indomitable energy, his charming personality, his intense patriotic nature, his sterling integrity and his inspiring and eloquent words, endeared him in an extraordinary degree to his Comrades and to all who knew him.

The funeral services were held on the 18th, under the auspices of the Grand Army of the Republic, and many Comrades from all parts of the State were present to pay their last respects to his memory and to extend words of sympathy and affection to the bereaved family.

## GRAND ARMY JOURNAL.

I want to appeal to every Comrade who can afford it, to subscribe to this paper, edited by Miss Helen I. Parker. It will not only interest them, but will make them better Grand Army Comrades and more regular in their attendance at Post meetings.

## CONCLUSION.

I want to most heartily thank the Council of Administration and my entire staff, who have so ably assisted me during the year, and to them, for their interest and hard work, is due a great deal of credit for whatever successes I have attained as Department Commander. And in conclusion I want to thank each and every Comrade for their friendship and fraternal feelings, and so long as I live it will be my prayer that the closing years of your lives will be filled with peace and happiness.

CHARLES A. ORR,

*Department Commander.*

Comrade A. G. Mills, Post 140.—I move that the report be received and referred to the Special Committee on the Commander's Report, when appointed. I also move that the reports of the other Department officers and of the Council of Administration be received and referred without reading (except as such reading may hereafter be called for by this Encampment) to the respective committees on such reports, when appointed.

This motion was adopted and the report was so referred.

The Committee on Commander's Report, to whom this report was referred, subsequently, through Past Department Commander Kay, made the following request:

Comrade Kay.—I wish to state that the report of the Department Commander is in the hands of the committee; many of the committee are not present, and we think that the report requires more than a passing notice, and we ask leave to have our report

upon the Commander's address sent to the proper officials when it is prepared, so that our work in its preparation may be more properly performed, and in order that the matter may be put in better form for the working of the Department.

This permission was granted; and the report of the Committee on address of Department Commander will be forwarded to the Assistant Adjutant-General when ready.

*To the Thirty-sixth Annual Encampment, Department of New York,  
Grand Army of the Republic:*

Comrades.—Your Committee on the Report of Department Commander Charles A. Orr, submit the following:

We congratulate the Comrades on the concise manner in which the Department Commander has given to the Encampment an account of his stewardship. We congratulate him on his excellent administration of Department affairs. Duty well and truly performed is never without some reward. He has well earned our fraternal thanks.

We earnestly approve and ask the attention of Comrades to the views by him expressed relative to a more general observance in our daily lives of the principles of Fraternity, Charity and Loyalty. These are more than the keystone in the arch of our faith, for they are the very foundation stones upon which our Order is built. Memories of other days of trial and danger, of "troubles and joys," to which allusion is made, should make Comrades more tender and true to each other, now.

The reference to the death of our Comrade, President William McKinley, is thoughtfully expressed. The information given as to the part taken in the ceremonies attendant upon the removal of his remains from Buffalo to Washington, and thence to the place of their final interment near his home at Canton, by the Comrades representing the National Encampment of the Grand Army of the Republic, especially those of this Department, should be enlarged upon and the matter placed in the archives of our Order at Albany, to be there preserved as a part

of its history. The amount of \$3,000 reported as the sum contributed by the Comrades and Posts of this Department towards a monument to be erected to the memory of our distinguished Comrade at Canton, Ohio, is a fairly liberal one, but probably not as large as it would have been if the opinion of the Comrades as to the place of its locality was more united.

Your committee desires to emphasize and join in the expressed belief of the Department Commander that the flag of our country is flying upon or about every schoolhouse in this State. This should be so. Suitable recognition of the efforts that have been made by Hon. Charles R. Skinner, Superintendent of Public Instruction, to enforce the law of the State upon this subject, is merited. We would urge that every means possible be exercised to create and maintain in the hearts and minds of teachers and scholars admiration for the flag, as also for the principles it represents, and love for the country whose glory it declares to all the world. This accomplished, the fact of "Old Glory" flying upon or about every schoolhouse will soon be regarded as a loving duty, not a thing to be enforced by an appeal to law.

The consideration shown to war veterans by Theodore Roosevelt, President of the United States, and Benjamin B. Odell, Jr., Governor of this State, as stated in the report, is worthy of these distinguished officials. And as well all others who enforce existing laws and champion new ones, for their benefit. This is as it should be.

One act of the President was a tribute by a younger soldier of "the late war" to his older Comrades of "the great war" of deep significance. In language terse and simple, evolved out of his own inner consciousness, an order issued at the request of the Committee on Legislation for Veterans in the Public Service of the Grand Army of the Republic, acting for the National Encampment, it breathes a loyalty to the cause of the saviors of the Union, worthy of emulation and praise. Your committee feel that its text should be strongly emphasized and made a part of this report, and it therefore follows:

## EXECUTIVE ORDER.

The attention of the Departments is hereby called to the provisions of the laws giving preference to veterans in appointment and retention.

The President desires that whenever the needs of the service will justify it and the laws will permit, preference shall be given alike in appointment and retention to honorably discharged veterans of the Civil War who are fit and qualified to perform the duties of the places which they seek or are filling.

(Signed) THEODORE ROOSEVELT.

White House, January 17, 1902.

While the laws of the Nation in the interest of the soldier and sailor of the Civil War, in the matter of preference in the public service, are not so numerous or liberal as in this State, this Executive Order means, that such as they are, these must now receive due consideration. So mote it be.

The bill passed at the last session of our Legislature and made effective by the signature of the Governor, entitled "An act to amend the Civil Service Law in relation to veterans," and known as chapter 270, Laws of New York, 1902, which gives all veterans who have passed a civil service examination and are employed by the State, or any of the counties, cities, towns or villages thereof, additional advantages concerning preference in employment and security in holding their positions, was far-reaching. This evidences gratitude that is tangible and helpful. It also conforms to the requirements of the State Constitution, the organic law, on that subject.

It now becomes the duty of the Department Officers to insist that the provisions of all existing laws in that behalf, National, State or municipal, shall be fairly construed and executed.

We heartily approve the recommendations and suggestions contained in the report upon the various other subjects referred to, especially that relative to our membership. Every worthy soldier, sailor or marine, who honorably wore the blue in "the days which tried men's souls," should now be in the Grand Army of the Republic, to remain there while he lives. And earnest efforts to make this a fact should be exerted "along the whole

line." We strongly commend this matter to the attention of the incoming Department Commander and Council of Administration.

The reference to the work of the Legislative Committee; to the Soldiers and Sailors' Home at Bath; to the Woman's Relief Corps Home at Oxford; to the Grand Army Journal, edited by Miss Helen I. Parker, and "In Memoriam" of Comrades "gone before," and the kindly words said of the several kindred organizations in whose prosperity we are interested—every one of them—are heartily approved and endorsed.

We commend the report as a whole to all Comrades. It contains many common-sense views, the observance of which will advance the good name and standing of our Order, particularly in this Department.

The better to express recognition and "honor give where honor's due," resolutions embodying some of the recommendations of Department Commander Orr are submitted for the consideration of and action by the Encampment.

Resolved, That the thanks of the Department of New York, Grand Army of the Republic, in annual session assembled at Saratoga Springs, June 27-28, 1902, rightfully due, are hereby tendered as follows:

To Theodore Roosevelt, a son of New York, its former Governor, now President of the United States. His executive order, dated January 17, 1902, requiring due consideration regarding the laws affecting the employment and retention of veterans in the public service of the national government by public officers; the reference in his message to the fifty-seventh Congress, as also in many public speeches, concerning the services of the men—living and dead—of the great war, are well-timed. They attest his loyalty to the cause of those now living who by patriotic devotion on land and sea for the country in the days which tried men's souls, demonstrated that they did "stay put." Such tributes from a distinguished younger soldier of the "late war" to his older Comrades of "the great war," are examples worthy of emulation and praise from all citizens of a redeemed Nation, and of soldiers and sailors everywhere. They may well inspire others, "Go thou and do likewise."

To Benjamin B. Odell, Jr., Governor of the Empire State: A most fitting successor as a friend of the veteran to Hons. David B. Hill, Roswell P. Flower and Theodore Roosevelt, his predecessors in that high office, all of whom we delight to honor. His signature to every measure passed by the Legislature, having for its object recognition and honor to war veterans, citizens and residents of the State, especially so in the matter of preference in public employment, the care of those in Soldiers' Homes, and that none who die shall remain in pauper graves, demonstrates his affection and loyalty to the cause of the "boys in blue." By acts, not in idle words, is the promise of the Constitution of 1894, and other laws embodying the wishes of a grateful people, by him thus carried out. That every reasonable doubt has been solved by him in favor of proper recognition of those who in the sixties bared their breasts to the storm of shot and shell to the end that the Nation might survive, is made strongly manifest in chapter 270, Laws of New York, 1902. And his signature to the bill which provides a suitable monument to our Comrade, the martyr President, William McKinley, at Buffalo, meets the earnest approval of the people of our State.

To Charles R. Skinner, Superintendent of Public Instruction of the State, for the many patriotic acts by which he has endeared himself to the Comrades of this Department. That "Old Glory" should be revered and honored and the patriotism it inspires become an heirloom in the hearts and homes of all Americans, through the medium of the teachers and scholars in the public schools, has been his constant aim. With the flag we love upon or about every schoolhouse, the safety of the Republic and its free institutions, is assured.

To the Senate and Assembly of the State, for legislation in the interest of veterans—both the living and the dead—by which the people through their representatives in Legislature assembled, show a sincere gratitude by doing that which is helpful. Especially to Senator and Comrade T. E. Ellsworth, President pro tem. of the Senate, and to Assemblyman and Comrade Charles H. Cotton, who recognize that "fraternity means something;" as also to Hon. S. Fred. Nixon, Speaker of the Assembly, Hons. Otto Kelsey and Jotham B. Alds, for generous aid, are we under many obligations; while to others named or referred to in Commander Orr's report, for many kindly offices, particularly Hon. Henry W. Hill and Hon. John H. Bradley and Mr. Butler of the "Buffalo Evening News," in the matter of the McKinley monument at Buffalo, we feel most grateful. Be it also

Resolved. That the Report of the Department Commander be approved and adopted, and that a copy of the same, together with a copy of the report of this committee, with the resolutions, it being also approved and adopted as a whole, shall be sent, duly authenticated by the incoming Department Commander and Assistant Adjutant-General, to all those herein and therein named.

Respectfully submitted.

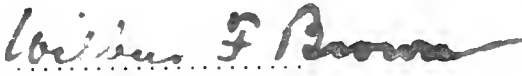
JOS. W. KAY, P. D. C.,  
 STEPHEN P. CORLISS, P. D. C.,  
 JAMES TANNER, P. D. C.,  
 N. M. CURTIS, P. D. C.,  
 HARRISON CLARK, P. D. C.,  
 M. J. CUMMINGS, C. of A.,  
*Committee.*

"EXTRACT FROM JOURNAL."



*Department Commander.*

OFFICIAL.



*Assistant Adjutant-General.*

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